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Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

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ACTIONS AIMED AT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WTO AGREEMENT ON SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

INFORMATION SUBMITTED BY THE INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR COOPERATION ON AGRICULTURE (IICA)

The following communication, received on 26 June 2014, is being circulated at the request of the IICA.

1. The observer organizations of the WTO Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Committee) are invited to submit reports on the activities they have carried out to promote the understanding and implementation of the SPS Agreement. The IICA wishes to present some of the actions and activities that it considers relevant to the work of this Committee.

1 SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES (CAPACITY BUILDING AND RELATIONSHIP WITH MULTILATERAL FORUMS)

2. As part of the Programme to Promote Participation in the Codex Alimentarius in the Americas, the IICA will, in the first half of this year, conclude its support for three Codex Committees: (i) Contaminants in Foods; (ii) Pesticide Residues; and (iii) the Codex Alimentarius Commission. Some 28 technicians from around 20 countries will have benefited from these three meetings.

3. The IICA will continue to support coordination videoconferences for Latin American and Caribbean countries within the Codex Alimentarius framework. These sessions make it possible to virtually coordinate the various agenda items of Codex meetings and to find issues or positions of common interest to the region. The coordination sessions are conducted in English and Spanish. Six sessions were held in the first half of the year.

4. As part of the Capacity-Building and Codex Alimentarius Promotion Programme, three workshops were held in May and June at national level, in Paraguay, El Salvador and Honduras, for political actors involved in national Codex management. The workshops sought to promote the development of institutional capacity among the Codex community and the understanding and importance of the Codex Alimentarius among the politicians and decision-makers who directly influence Codex Alimentarius management.

5. As part of the action plan with the IPPC Secretariat, and through the support provided by the Secretariat, the IICA participated as an observer member of the Capacity Development Committee (CDC) and helped to update the Handbook of Good Practices for Participation in Meetings of the IPPC. It also helped to develop an online tool that provides guidance on how to prepare for the meeting of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CMF) and on the technical and logistical aspects that facilitate participation. The IICA actively participated in the training session prior to the start of the CMF meeting and officially presented the online tool that is available on the IPPC's phytosanitary resources web page (<http://www.phytosanitary.info/information/participation-commission-phytosanitary-measures-cpm>).

2 SUPPORT FOR INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING

6. Performance, Vision and Strategy (PVS) for National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs): the IICA, keen to contribute to strengthening NPPOs, and taking into account the changes in recent years at international level and the need to adapt to the current context, began to revise and update the PVS tool, the 2014 version of which is now available. The IICA hopes that this will help NPPOs rate their performance level and establish priorities and that it will facilitate their strategic planning. It can also help them to share a vision with the private sector, with a view to meeting their obligations and benefiting from new opportunities. The implementation process has also begun in two South American countries.

7. In May, the IICA implemented its PVS tool for the Bolivian phytosanitary service (SENASAG). Participants included public sector officials from various institutions, private sector representatives, and academics. The tool was implemented to lay the groundwork for promoting the development and modernization of SENASAG.

8. In Peru, the IICA continues to support the formulation of a food safety policy through the Standing Multispectral Commission on Food Safety (COMPIAL). The progress made in the formulation process conducted by COMPIAL and the IICA was examined at a workshop held at the end of March. This workshop, entitled "National Food Safety Policy", was attended by public sector representatives and private-sector associations involved in food safety policy implementation.

9. As part of the project "Capacity building for micro and small enterprises for compliance with sanitary and phytosanitary measures in the Canadian market", two workshops were held in Colombia and Peru to provide training on SPS requirements to agricultural producers with export potential. The workshops were aimed at quinoa, cocoa, tilapia, aromatic plant and unrefined cane sugar (panela) production chains. A trade mission to Canada was also organized with producers from these chains to meet potential buyers and learn more about the Canadian institutional framework and its rules. This project is funded using CATRTA - Canada resources.

10. As part of the STDF 436 project "Strengthening regional capacity to meet pesticide export requirements based on international standards", a Steering Committee meeting was held in June in Costa Rica. Participants included delegates from six countries and representatives of the IICA, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the IR-4 (USDA project on specialty crops). Also in attendance was an expert from the Joint FAO/WHO Meeting on Pesticide Residues (JMPR), who gave a detailed explanation of aspects pertaining to the establishment and approval of maximum residue levels (MRLs) for pesticides within the Codex Alimentarius framework.

11. As part of the "Sanitary Early Warning in Territories Susceptible to Climate Change" project, in March and April the IICA held six workshops for Paraguayan and Peruvian technicians and producers (in Nueva Italia and Caacupé in Paraguay, and in San Martín and Piura in Peru), the purpose of which was to strengthen the participants' technical skills in relation to good agricultural practices, pest identification and sample-taking for the timely detection of pests.

12. In Venezuela, the IICA held a workshop on Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs) and hazard analysis and critical control points (HACCP) on 2 and 3 April. This activity was conducted with a view to strengthening the institutional capacity of public officials from the People's Ministry of Health (MPS) in relation to the implementation and monitoring of programmes to ensure quality and safety in the food sector. The workshop was attended by officials from the Autonomous Sanitary Control Service of the MPS. A workshop was also held on risk management to present the current situation regarding food safety management and risk analysis at regional and international levels and to strengthen the basic concepts and tools relating to modern safety management and the new risk inspection approach.